181 who speak little; there are the choleric people, more liable than others
157 to anger, more spiteful, but also endowed with more energy.

Energy is not the chief quality of these people, who are trained by
181 their leaders to blind and faithful obedience. The tight organization
156 we have described has its unhappy consequences, atrophy of the will and destruction of the spirit of initiative. Such is the price. A Mossi cannot resist those who are more powerful. Flexible and almost cowardly before his superiors, he makes up for it with his inferiors and shows great arrogance and disdain toward those who are weaker.

181 /110/ The Mossi do not exercise their will, and they do not exer-
153 cise their thinking faculty. This is not because they lack intelligence, but because they are not accustomed to thought except when their interests are at stake, at which time some of them demonstrate true intelligence and diplomacy.

The Mossi do not question the why of things. While small children in our country like to argue and often perplex us with their questions, the Mossi never ask themselves, "How can this be? Why is it so and not otherwise?" The first answer that comes to mind satisfies them.

This lack of thought is the cause of their lagging civilization, for is it not true that we move forward unceasingly only because we seek to investigate the cause of everything? It also results in a paucity of ideas. Conversations turn mainly upon women, food, and agriculture during the rainy season. Their sphere of ideas is quite restricted, but it is capable of expansion, for the Mossi may be considered quite intelligent.

539 If proverbs express the wisdom of a people, the Mossi certainly do not lack wisdom and often couch it with great subtlety. Permit us to prove this by quoting a few proverbs, culled in the course of conversations by Fr. Thueux, who kindly conveyed them to us and who gathered explanations, since some of them are real enigmas to our European minds.

1. Kota ningri, ka kot' sen kong'ye.
   Give above you, not below.
   (If you give to someone who is more powerful, you will always get something out of it.)
2. Maokasankaré ñarda kon lo'é naobi taoré.
   No matter how much it may hurry, the heel never catches up with the toes.
   (Who is the hen to sing before the rooster?)